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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6933  
INFO RUCNASE/ASEAN MEMBER COLLECTIVE  
RUEHGG/UN SECURITY COUNCIL COLLECTIVE  
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 0762  
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 4309  
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 7853  
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 5413  
RHHMUNA/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI  
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 3421  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 1208  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC  
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS  
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L RANGOON 001177

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STATE FOR EAP AND IO; PACOM FOR FPA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/20/2017

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [BM](#)

SUBJECT: BURMA: NO NEWS IS BAD NEWS

REF: RANGOON 1148

Classified By: Pol Officer Sean O'Neill for Reasons 1.4 (b) & (d)

¶1. (C) Summary. Activist and DVB stringer Aye Myin Soe is in hiding and informed us there is no one left in Burma to research and file stories for the Norwegian-based broadcaster. Authorities have held his three colleagues - Ko Myat San, Win Maw, and Aung Gyi - in Insein Prison since their arrest a few weeks ago. Detained activist Su Su Nwe is being held in a Rangoon police station, not Insein Prison, and is reportedly in good health. End Summary.

¶2. (C) Political activist and DVB stringer Aye Myin Soe told us he has been on the run from authorities since his three colleagues were arrested (reftel). Activists Ko Myat San and Win Maw were arrested on November 27, Aung Gyi was picked up about a week later. Aye Myin Soe had been working with the three as stringers for the Democratic Voice of Burma (DVB) before they were arrested. He said that the families of the three detained activists had been allowed to visit them in Insein Prison last week and reported they are in good health.

¶3. (C) Aye Myin Soe pointed out it was only after Ko Myat San and Win Maw had been in custody for a few days that they came after Aung Gyi and him. He speculated authorities may have learned of the four men's connection with DVB after interrogating them. Now, he said, there was no one left in Burma to research and file stories for the Norwegian-based broadcaster. He added that most of DVB's recent coverage was based on second-hand reports from open sources or exiles in Thailand. He believed that training others to serve as stringers was critical at this time. However he feared being arrested if he provides the training, so may flee the country.

Su Su Nwe Update

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¶4. (C) A source with ongoing contacts with local police reported that Su Su Nwe is being held in Rangoon's Bahan Township police station, not Insein Prison. According to his police contacts, the detained activist - who suffers from heart trouble - has received a medical check-up every two days since she was arrested on November 13. The Bahan

Township Police Chief reportedly ordered his officers to be on their best behavior around Su Su Nwe and to treat her as they would a guest. Opposition lawyers told us her case was transferred from a township court to the Rangoon district court on December 10 but said authorities have not said anything further about her legal status.

15. (C) Comment. We have noticed a marked decline in the number of Burma-based stories being carried on DVB since the arrest of their three clandestine stringers. This is bad news in a country starved for uncensored, independent reporting of the true situation inside Burma, which was DVB's particular strength. Our challenge will be developing a new generation of people inside Burma willing to risk prison to get the truth out. End Summary.

VILLAROSA